

IF this year goes down as The Year Of Tough Women In Film, then Linda Hamilton certainly will top the list.

She has returned to Terminator 2: Judgment Day, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, as Sarah Connor, the lonely waitress transformed into a gutsy fighter in the original Terminator film seven years ago.

This time she's so tough that director Jim Cameron calls her "the film's real Terminator".

Linda, 34, is thrilled to head a list of muscle-bound actresses, including Thelma And Louise stars Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis, making an impact this year.

"I believe in women's strength in crisis," she tells TV WEEK. "I believe in women and their abilities in anything they decide to do."

"God bless Jim Cameron for creating Sarah Connor. There are strong women and strong men in the real world and they should both be on screen."

In Terminator 2: Judgment Day, Sarah Connor realizes her duty is to kill the man responsible for creating the technology that will begin the nuclear war she knows is in the future.

"On a psychological level, Sarah becomes the Terminator of the second film," Jim Cameron says. "Our violent nature is probably responsible for our success on this planet, equally with our intelligence."

"The price that we have to pay is that we always hover on the edge of annihilation. What do you do about that? Sarah has to battle with the value of human life."

Linda had a personal trainer who worked with her six days a week for months before the beginning of the shoot and well into production.

"I'm pretty lucky genetically and have a lot of muscle and am very strong, but my baby was a year old then so when I started training, I had a little extra work to do," she says, referring to her son from her former marriage to actor Bruce Abbott.

Linda got hooked on working out

and says she now has gymnasium sessions five days a week.

"But I've trimmed down because I was a little over-built for my taste," she adds with a grin. "Photographers would see my chest muscles rippling and it just wasn't feminine!"

Linda had gruelling training with ex-Israeli commando Uzi Gal.

"We worked three hours every day and learned guns, some judo, a lot of military tactics and lots of freeing hostages and coping with

terrorist situations," she says.

"It was very intense. It was not pleasant and I dreaded it — I only went because I knew Sarah Connor had not had an easy seven years and there was no wimping out for me."

"There was a whole different mind set I had to learn, an absolute paring down of the emotional and passionate part of me because there is simply no room for that sort of thing in the military."

Although Terminator 2: Judgment Day is full of violence, Linda doesn't think it falls into the classic action genre of Schwarzenegger's past films, such as Predator and Total Recall.

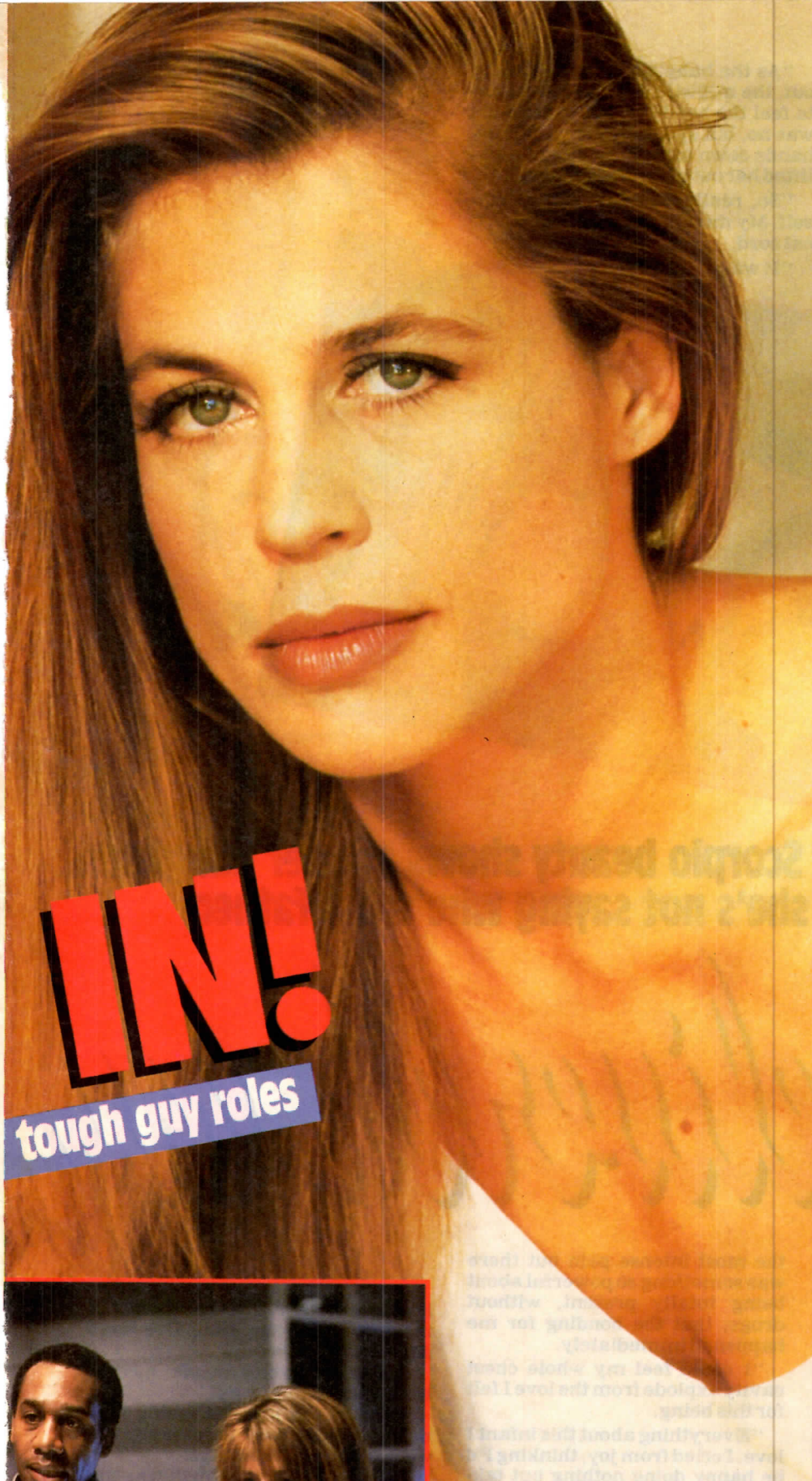
"I think our film is necessarily violent and I never thought I would find myself using those two words together," she says.

MAIN PICTURES:
Glamor and gung ho ... Terminator 2's Linda Hamilton.
BELOW: Gun-toting Linda and Arnold Schwarzenegger with Miles Dyson in a scene from the ultra-action film.

MUSCLING

Linda leads the ladies who are terminating the





IN!
tough guy roles



"We are making a statement about violence with violence and respect for human life."

While Linda supports women who want to join the military and fight wars, she is personally opposed to using guns and says her own experi-

ences on the film helped her reach that decision.

"The last time I answered a question about guns, my answer was so fractured because I spoke as an actress, and then as a person who doesn't believe in killing, and then as a mother who would kill to protect her son," she says.

"But that night I had the most powerful dream I've ever had. I dreamt I accidentally killed someone.

"I dreamt I was at the Cannes Film Festival and checked my gun at the front desk. When it was handed back to me, it accidentally fired through to the next room and I had to go back and see that a man was killed and a woman was stopping breathing.

"It was a real catharsis of all the violence I had lived through with the picture and I woke up begging God for forgiveness, even though I knew it was only a dream. I wept and prayed for about 20 minutes. The film really took its toll.

"After that, I can honestly say that no, I don't believe in guns for killing, and I don't believe I'd ever be able to do it in any situation,

“I’ve trimmed down because I was a little over-built for my taste . . . photographers would see my chest muscles rippling and it just wasn’t feminine”

warfare or not. I would protect with any other weapon I had, but I don't believe in guns."

Although Linda was physically and mentally exhausted when the six-month shoot was over, she says the film was an exhilarating experience overall (she's also rumored to be involved with T2 director James Cameron, who recently separated from his third wife, director Kathryn Bigelow).

"You do the job and you glory in it as you do it," she says. "I was drained, but as happy as I've ever been and riding high on what I did.

"I don't believe any women have done what I got to do in this film, in terms of just carrying it so far with my body, hauling myself around to the point where I lost my hearing at one point and couldn't talk for three days, and all the amazing things I had to do every day."

If Terminator 2: Judgment Day was a war, Linda says with a grin, she would have earned medals.

"Well, there are no medals, but I have a few scars as mementos!"

*From Jenny Cooney
in Los Angeles*